

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 078 504

EA 005 042

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TITLE Stanford's Multidisciplinary Research Training Program in Educational Policy Analysis.
PUB DATE 15 Feb 73
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (58th, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 25-March 1, 1973)
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; Consultants; *Consultation Programs; Educational Change; Educational Development; *Educational Research; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Policy Formation; Social Sciences
IDENTIFIERS Stanford

ABSTRACT

Stanford's multidisciplinary program (1) encourages the combining of a concern over educational policy and educational changes with the competence to make rigorous and imaginative contributions to policy and change; and (2) develops an awareness of the relationship among policymaking in education, fundamental research in social science, and reflection on the nature and purposes of social institutions. Participants in the program engage in one or more policy analysis-research projects. In this part of the activity, a participant acts essentially as a consultant (invited or uninvited) to a governmental agency, educational institution, or community group. Each participant is also expected to devote approximately one-fourth of his time to strengthening some aspect of his formal training relevant to the general objectives of the program. The report identifies the participants in the program and their projects and briefly discusses some problems encountered in multidisciplinary research and training. (JF)

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TO: Fellow Discussants at AERA Experimental Session, February 26, 1973
FROM: David B. Tyack
DATE: February 15, 1973
RE: Stanford's Multidisciplinary Research Training Program in
Educational Policy Analysis

As background for our discussion of multidisciplinary training for educational R&D I am presenting here a brief statement of what we proposed to do, how we are carrying out the program, and some concluding observations on this model of interdisciplinary work.

1. What We Proposed to Do

We believe that current efforts at Stanford and elsewhere to strengthen the intellectual resources for making educational policy in the United States can be improved by programs that do three things:

- (1) Provide units of education that are larger than a course but smaller than a degree, and that are consistent with a variety of degree and non-degree objectives of highly skilled individuals.
- (2) Encourage the combination of a concern with educational policy and educational changes with the competence to make rigorous and imaginative contributions to them.
- (3) Develop an explicit awareness of the relations among policy-making in education, fundamental research in

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social science, and reflection on the nature and purposes of social institutions.

The program we propose is a modest pilot step in these directions.

Stanford has the experience, students, faculty, and flexibility to make the program plausible. The School of Education has strong, established programs in educational research, in educational administration, and in the social and behavioral sciences. It has able students, and faculty, close ties with the educational profession and educational institution, and an unusual degree of involvement with the major departments in social and behavioral science at Stanford.

Students in the proposed program will draw upon the regular School of Education faculty. That faculty includes a rather large number of scholars with experience in relating social science to problems of policy analysis. We note, for example, Professor Elizabeth Cohen who has made extensive studies of unequal status interaction and intervention techniques designed to promote successful integration; Professor James March, an expert on decision-making in complex organizations; Professor Michael Kirst, who has had wide experience in policy formation in the federal government and who teaches courses on public policy; Professor Henry Levin, an expert on the economics of education, who has specialized in questions such as community control of schools, and vouchers; and Professor David Tyack, who is currently completing a history of urban education in the 20th Century.

The proposed program exploits Stanford's demonstrated competence at combining educational concern with disciplinary rigor. For a small, carefully selected, and intellectually able group of students, we propose to offer an intensive one-year experience that will supplement their regular

program at Stanford or elsewhere. The criterion for selection will be the capability of engaging in unambiguously high quality policy analysis and research, without regard for race, sex, national origin, or current student status.

The proposed program involves one full calendar year of work, beginning with the Fall Quarter, 1972. It is a full-time program and participants will be expected to complete the entire year. The program involves three major activities:

Policy analysis. Each participant will participate in one or more major policy analysis-research projects. This activity will represent approximately one-half of the student's time over the year. In this part of his activity he will act essentially as a consultant (invited or uninvited) to a governmental agency, educational institution, or community group. He will be encouraged to combine the attentiveness to the needs of the "client" with the independent integrity of a disciplined analyst in the way that distinguishes significant consulting work. He will work closely with the field coordinator for the program, with faculty members, and with other participants. The group of participants and faculty will constitute collectively an audience for the projects, and each project will be subject to formal quarterly review and critique by the whole group.

Fundamental skill training. Each participant will be expected to devote approximately one-fourth of his time to strengthening some aspect of his formal training applicable to the general objectives of the program. Each student will develop his own program in fundamental skill training in consultation with the faculty. He may select courses from the regular

courses offered at Stanford. With the approval of the faculty involved, he may meet this requirement through reading, tutorial, or individual apprenticeship experience.

Program Colloquium. We believe it is essential to create an atmosphere in which the participants and faculty members can educate each other. Each participant will devote approximately one-fourth of his time to a Colloquium on Educational Problems. In this colloquium faculty members and students will present reports on relevant research, will discuss major issues of educational leadership and policy, and will engage colleagues and friends in discussion of contemporary issues, new research directions, and mutual fantasies.

During the Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters, a participant's time will be divided approximately equally among the three activities. During the Summer quarter virtually all of his time will be spent on completing his policy analysis projects, preparing the formal report on those projects, and presenting that report.

2. Carrying Out the Program

Four activities took place from March through September, 1972: Planning, recruitment, selection of interns and organization of the program. Faculty associated with the Program, Victor Baldridge, Elizabeth Cohen, Michael Kirst, Henry Levin, James March, and David Tyack met to discuss procedures to recruit interns, criteria of selection and program activities. Letters were sent to the faculty of the School of Education and other faculties within Stanford to nominate individuals for internships. Applications were screened and choices were made by a committee of faculty members.

The eight interns selected were:

- 1) William Behn, graduate in electrical engineering, former RAND analyst for health care delivery programs in New York City, and graduate student in economics.
- 2) Paul Chapman, former teacher in a Palo Alto alternative high school and graduate student in the history of education.
- 3) Denis Hayes, former Trustee of Stanford University, member of National Programming Council for Public Television, and graduate student in business.
- 4) Jane Hannaway, analyst at the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity.
- 5) Donald Hense, graduate student in higher education administration.
- 6) Rudy Johnson, graduate student in sociology of education and a former minister.
- 7) Eliot Levinson, former special assistant to the Chancellor of the New York City public schools and graduate student in education.
- 8) Steven Swerdlick, former administrator in a Bedford-Stuyvesant (N.Y.) elementary school and graduate student in education.

Also selected was project coordinator Larry Cuban, an experienced teacher and administrator from Washington, D. C.

In September, a series of meetings among faculty and later the full group of interns and faculty produced the following format for the first quarter. Once a week the group would meet to discuss current issues in educational policy analysis, policy issues that particular faculty members were investigating, and the policy areas that each intern planned to investigate. In addition, interns could work at least one-fourth of their time strengthening some portion of their formal training that pertained to their particular policy area. Eliot Levinson, for example, took a course in computer statistics; Jane Hannaway took a course in sociological research methods. Others worked informally with particular faculty members.

Three of the interns have formal clients for whom they are preparing policy analysis. Eliot Levinson is analyzing various alternative day-care delivery systems for the National Program on Early Childhood Education; Jane Hannaway is investigating reforms in higher education for disadvantaged students for the Office of Economic Opportunity; Rudy Johnson is analyzing school organizational decision-making responding to lay advice on redesigning the school system for the Palo Alto Unified School District.

Four interns are analyzing policies as if they were submitting their analyses to clients. William Behn is working on voucher systems; Denis Hayes is studying the impact of television on how people perceive the energy needs of the country; Donald Hense is analyzing the impact of federal legislation upon Black colleges; and Steven Swerdlick is working on educational leadership at the local school level.

3. Observations on the Model

The literature on educational leadership richly describes the difficult time leaders have in analyzing policies. Lack of skills, the pressures of time and conflicting demands, emphasis on practical experience and folk knowledge emerge as obstructions to coherent and effective decision-making. Moreover, the literature emphasizes lack of understanding of organizations, deficits in viewing problems from different disciplinary and social perspectives, and narrow modes of communication and analysis as problems inhibiting policy formation. At the same time, social scientists often perceive policy issues within the confines of one discipline and do not have realistic understanding of the pressures on decision-makers or access to them. Thus a program designed to bring together the concerns of practitioners and scholars in a multidisciplinary manner fulfills a clear social need; policy studies, indeed, appear to require a multidisciplinary approach if the field is to offer sophisticated guidance to policy-makers working in the highly-pressurized atmosphere of educational institutions.

The problems that beset multi-disciplinary research and training in universities are well known. The departmental structure tends to reward those who work within the specialized confines of their discipline, even though in theory scholars may recognize that human concerns do not neatly conform to academic bailiwicks. Because our social scientists are based in a school of education at Stanford (though with joint or courtesy appointments), we are able to minimize some of these obstacles. A common concern for education links us; a multi-disciplinary faculty decides on appointment and promotion; and we share not only students but also certain common research interests.

Nonetheless, in the colloquia in the policy analysis program we have encountered some of the hurdles that inhere in multidisciplinary work; differences of terminology; different levels of expertise in the technology of research (such as statistics); and differing ideas about what constitutes fruitful questions and persuasive analysis. The student and faculty members of the colloquia decided to deal with diverse policy issues and to serve different sorts of clients rather than to focus on a particular policy question or client. That probably increased the intellectual diffusion, although it surely broadened the education of participants. In retrospect some of us now believe that it might have been wiser to have selected both faculty and students according to a pre-existing interest in some broad policy question (such as early childhood education). This might have promoted inter-disciplinary research and increased the coherence of the program. As it is, the participants have learned much about the topics, skills, and ideologies of their colleagues on a variety of educational matters, which is in itself a valuable achievement in a multi-versity that tends constantly to intellectual splintering.

Tying internships to policy clients has proven very useful, for again and again discussion has turned to ethical issues and expertise relevant to practice. The range of practical and scholarly experience of the group has served to widen perspectives both of interns and clients. Indeed, one approach that we have approximated on occasion is that of consulting firm seeking to meet specific needs of contractors -- but in this case without the constraints of a single disciplinary focus or fear of interpretations that might offend the customer.

The idea of a one-year, self-contained program pulling together the resources of the School and University for policy analysis seems to us a

valuable experiment, for it makes expertise and training accessible without the normal bureaucratic trappings of degrees, long time spans for training, and permanent commitments of scarce resources, such as faculty time. Thus, the program could serve persons at various stages in policy careers (as do some management training programs); could flexibly involve faculty and other institutional resources, depending on the particular focus; and could shift emphasis according to pressing educational needs. In a time of very rapid change such an "ad-hocracy" is highly functional, especially as a means of mid-career education.

In short, despite the problems noted above, the program strikes us as useful:

- (1) in meeting the growing social need for multidisciplinary policy analysis.
- (2) in promoting more exchange of expertise and perspective within the university and between scholars and practitioners.
- (3) in preparing skilled individuals able to exercise leadership and analyze policy.